

## A POWERFUL REASON FOR COMING TO CHRIST

### NO. 1529

A SERMON  
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 21, 1880,  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"A great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him."  
Mark 3:8.*

THE opposition of the great ones of the earth did not, after all, hinder the cause of Christ. The Pharisees, who were the leaders of religious thought, combined with the Herodians, who were the court party, to destroy Jesus, but at the very moment when their wrath had reached its highest pitch, the crowd about the Savior's person was greater than ever. Let us not, therefore, dear friends, be at all dismayed if great men and learned men and nominally religious men, should oppose the simple gospel of Christ. All the world is not bound up in a Pharisee's phylactery, nor held in chains by a philosopher's new fancy. If some will not have our Savior, others will—God's eternal purpose will stand and the kingdom of His Anointed shall come. If our Lord Jesus is rejected by the great, nevertheless the common people hear Him gladly. To the poor the gospel is preached and it is His joy and His delight that out of them He still gathers a company who, though poor in this world, are rich in faith and give glory to God. I would have you, beloved, count upon opposition and regard it as a token of coming blessings. Dread not the black cloud, it does but prognosticate a shower. March may howl and bluster and April may dampen all things with its rains, but the May flowers and the autumn's harvest of varied fruits will come and come by this very means. Go on and serve your God in the serenity of holy confidence and you shall live to see that the hand of the Lord is not to be turned back, though the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together.

Those who came to Christ in such great multitudes did not all come from right motives and I shall not assume that they did. Some came from idle curiosity, no doubt. Others came to listen to what He had to say, but were not prepared to believe in Him. We know that many came to be fed with loaves and fishes, swayed by the most mercenary motives. Still, in the case now under notice, large numbers came to Jesus because they had heard of the great things which He did, hoping that He would do something of the same kind for them, for multitudes of those who came were sick folk, plague-smitten, stricken with disease, and they came that by touching Him they might be delivered from all their sufferings. This gift they gained and glorified the name of the Lord. I shall not, therefore, stay to divide out the characters which made up the crowd, but remind you that we must never expect that all who come to hear the gospel will receive it. Just as Jesus went up into the mountain and there called out to Himself whom He would, so does He form His church, which is an assembly of called-out ones whom the sovereign Lord selects from the congregation of hearers that they may become a church of believers. The process of selection and separation is always going on and the great heap which lies on the threshing floor is being daily winnowed to divide the golden grain from the worthless chaff. For our present purpose only, we shall just now view those who literally came to Christ as the types of those who come spiritually. Many, I trust, who are present at this time will come to Jesus for the same reason that these people came, namely, because they have heard of the great things which have been done by Him. So to our work at once.

Three things are before us. The first is *the attraction*—"They had heard what great things He did." Secondly, *the gathering*—"They came unto Him." And thirdly, the context furnishes us with this—*the result* of the attraction and the gathering. We find it written, "He had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues."

**I.** Here is the **ATTRACTION**—"They had heard what great things He did." My dear hearers, the case of these people is parallel with your own. There must be very few of you here but what have heard of the great things which Jesus Christ has done.

Let us note, first, that *these people had heard with somewhat of a believing ear*. Stories floated about concerning one who had healed blindness, palsy, leprosy and they accepted the statements as facts. A

lame man told how he had been made to leap like a hart and a blind man declared that his eyes had been opened, and as these wonders passed from mouth to mouth these people believed them to be true. I know that even those of you who are not converted yet believe what is recorded in these four gospels concerning the miracles that Jesus worked. You are persuaded that the records are authentic. You believe that the Lord Jesus did heal the sick and that He did even raise the dead and cast out devils. You also accept the grand gospel statement that He is able to save unto the uttermost those that come unto God by Him. Believing so much as that, you ought to believe a good deal more and I pray the Holy Spirit now to lead you to that farther faith. If you have come as far as that, the most reasonable thing to do is to go to Him with your own case and trust Him to heal *you*. I am persuaded that I may go very far with many here present in a statement of their beliefs. You believe that Jesus Christ has done great spiritual wonders for multitudes. You have been told of great sinners whose hard hearts have been softened, whose characters have been changed, whose lives have been renewed, whose sins have been forgiven. You have met with such, have you not? The deed of grace was performed upon your own brother, perhaps, or upon some intimate friend or some person of public notoriety. You know many such cases and you believe them to be genuine wonders of grace. You do not think that conversion is all a delusion—you have not reached that degree of unbelief. Indeed, instead of unbelief, you are filled with ardent admiration and feel a measure of desire to be saved yourself, and while sitting in this house you have often said, “Yes, I believe it is so. Oh that the mighty grace of God would renew me and that I could touch the hem of the Savior’s garment that He might save even me.” Believing so much as you do, you ought in all reason to believe more. I mean you should go on to trust Him who has worked these great things and place your own case in His hands and leave it there. This is the legitimate course to pursue. A man believes a certain medicine to have worked great cures and he knows that he himself is sick of the disease which it is meant to heal. Why, it seems as if no one needs to say, “The next step is that you should try that medicine upon yourself.” Yet it grieves me that so many of you do not proceed to this saving point, but linger on the borders of faith. You see the river of the water of life and wish to drink, for you are sure that it would quench your thirst and yet you are in danger of perishing in sight of the flowing stream. O, Holy Spirit, remove the madness of sin and teach men true wisdom.

The many who came to Jesus felt themselves drawn because they had heard of the great things which He had done and believed them. They proceeded, however, to the second step which I have already indicated, for *they drew from what they had heard an argument of hope*. They said, “Has He done these great things to others? Why should He not work the same gracious miracles upon us?” The palsied man said, “He that was sick as I am has been recovered. Surely, if I could get near to Jesus and could catch His eye, He would restore *me*.” The blind said, “He healed one like myself—oh, if I could but sit where He passes by I would cry, ‘You Son of David, have mercy on me,’ and He would open my eyes, too.” They could not be at once sure that He would heal them, for that He works a cure in one is not in itself a proof that He will work upon another, but they were further informed that He delighted in mercy and that He was gentle and gracious and easily entreated and therefore they concluded that if such an One had power to work such beneficent miracles and evidently had a will to work them, they had but to come to Him and they would be partakers of His healing power. O that my unconverted hearers would act reasonably at this time and draw the same conclusion. I pray you, dear friends, see how sensible these people were that you may imitate them. To me it seems as plain as the working out of a proposition in mathematics. Jesus has saved such as I am, therefore He can save me. To believe in Him is as reasonable an act as to eat that which is good when you know it is good and know that you need it. Or to drink that which quenches thirst, when you perceive that it is suitable for that purpose and that you are in need of drink. O that your hearts would say—Jesus Christ has worked great deeds of grace. He is evidently willing to work more—let me, then, come to Him and trust myself in His hands. If this is a time of cool, collected thought and the Holy Spirit works in us wisdom, it will again happen that, “A great multitude, when they had heard of the great things which Jesus did, came unto Him.”

One more step should be mentioned. *No doubt these persons were partly urged to come to Him by their own sad condition*. Some of them were full of pain through bodily plagues and others suffered poverty and wretchedness through being blind, crippled, lame, or withered and they were anxious to be delivered from their infirmity and the poverty which came of it. Being convinced that their cases were similar to those which had been healed by Christ, they felt an eager desire to see what He could do for

them. Now, I know that I may call my hearers to Christ till I lose my voice, but none will come but those who feel that they need Him, but my dear unconverted hearers, you need Him whether you know it or not. There is a disease upon you which has already brought you down to spiritual death and will bring you down to hell before long. The most mortal of you, the most amiable of you, unless Jesus shall look upon you in love, is carrying about within himself a plague of the heart which will be your eternal ruin. Jesus must save you or you are lost. There is no hope for any man among you except it come from Him. Do you know this? If so, come at once to the Savior. Do you not know it? Then believe it to be so, for so it is and let the conviction lead you to seek His face.

But recollect, these people did not *only* come because they were sick or because they felt they were sick, for they had long known and felt their sicknesses and had remained at home, or they had resorted to other physicians, or to Bethesda's pool, or to some other famous fount. They came to Jesus because, knowing and feeling their need, they also perceived that Jesus was able to meet their case. Come then to Christ, O my sin-stricken hearer, because, be your condition what it may, He can meet it. Are you troubled with hardness of heart? By His Spirit He can take away the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. Is your difficulty unbelief? You cannot see the truth, but the Lord Jesus can open the eyes of him that was born blind. Is it a case of want of power? Is your hand withered? The Lord can bid the withered hand be stretched out and it shall be done. It is not possible that there should be any mortal or spiritual disease about any one of you that will baffle the power of my great Lord and Master. If you do but come to Him, He can and will make you every whit whole. He has already dealt with cases like yours, as bad as yours, as desperate as yours—in the record of His cures there are instances parallel to your own and some which even surpass them in difficulty. Depend on it, He is able to do again what He has already done, for He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His arm is not shortened that He cannot save. He can reach as far as sin can go and draw back those whom Satan has driven to the pit's mouth. Now, be reasonable and act upon this fact. May the Spirit of God lead you in the way of understanding and then you will say today, "I also will join that multitude who, having heard of the great things which Jesus did, came to Him." God grant it may be so. Yes, He will grant it, for His Word shall not return unto Him void.

**II.** Secondly, I shall ask you to think of THE GATHERING. We have seen the attraction, now let us see what it drew together. "They came unto Him." Observe, then, that *hearing did not content them*. I wish I could say this of all my hearers. These people heard the story of what Christ had done and I should not wonder but what they said, "It is good news. Say it in our ears a second time." They were told that He had opened the eyes of a blind man and a blind man who heard it cried out, "Gladsome tidings. Tell me that again." I should not wonder if that blind man went many times to the house of the person who reported the cure and said, "Tell me again of this matter." The woman, too, who was sick with internal disease, said, "You told us of one that was healed. Tell us of that marvel again." Yes, but what would you have thought if they had kept on week after week saying, "Tell us that story! Tell us that story!" and then had gone home and said, "We feel so much better. We feel comforted by hearing this good news"? What fools they would have been to have been satisfied with a mere report of other people's cures without going to the great Physician to obtain healing for themselves. Did you not sing the other day—

*"Tell me the story often,  
For I forget so soon,  
The early dew of morning  
Has passed away at noon?"*

Why should you be told that tale so often? Will you never draw the inference that Jesus is able to save you and will you never go to Him *for yourselves*? I am afraid that some of you are getting satisfied with coming to the Tabernacle and that you are beginning to think, "There is hope for me. I always hear the Word of God. I am a regular hearer of the gospel of Jesus." Yes, but that is not it. Those who are hearers only are not blessed in the deed. A hungry man hears that there is bread given away to the poor and he says, "Tell me where the food is given and on what terms and I will hasten to get it, for I am famished." Do you think the poor starving wretch will stop here a week and be refreshed by merely hearing about bread? Not he. He will die if he does that. He may perhaps ask again for information and say, "Tell me once more. Give me plain directions where to go and I will hasten to be fed as others have been," but he

will not expect to fill his empty stomach with merely hearing the news. He is not so stupid as that. I am compelled to feel that some of you are very short of sense when you are dealing with your souls. Why, some of you might almost sing—

*“Tell me the same old story,  
Though you have cause to fear  
That I shall miss of glory,  
And die with grace so near.”*

O that this fooling would come to an end. Think me not harsh, I am but honest. It is fooling and nothing better to go on hearing the Word and refusing to obey its call. May God’s grace lead you to come to Jesus at once. O do not be hearers only. Turn your faces Christward and accept His great salvation.

Observe, next, that *these people did not wait until Jesus came to them*. That we are to wait till Jesus comes to us is a common error—a sort of orthodox wickedness, a rebellious unbelief dressed out as humble submissiveness. I have known this preached—that we are to wait at the pool of the ordinances, in the hope that one of these days the angel may trouble the pool and we shall step in. Those who talk so are not as a rule the most successful of soul-winners and that fact reminds me of a story I have heard of a Scotchman who had attended the ministry of an Episcopal minister for some years. At last Donald forsook the Episcopal Church and when he was missed, the pastor came to him. “Why don’t you come to the church, Donald?” “Because I want to be saved and I get no good with you.” “Ah,” said the bishop, “you should wait at the pool.” “I have been waiting at the pool a long time,” said Donald, “a very long while and no good has come of it.” “But, Donald, you know the man who waited was healed at last.” “Ah, well, sir, but he had some encouragement, for he saw some step in before him, but all these years that I have waited at your pool I have never seen one step in yet and therefore I will wait no longer.” Donald was right—no man can afford to run so terrible a risk as to remain in disobedience in the bare hope of some unpromised salvation. The gospel narrative does not teach us to wait at the pool. I want to call particular attention to that fact. See the crowd lying around the pool of Bethesda? What did Jesus do when He came walking along that morning through the five porches? Listen, you sick folk, waiting still at the pool. Does He say, “Wait patiently”? Not a word of it, but singling out a man who was among the most despairing, He said, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” That is the gospel. It is a divine command to believe and live. Our Lord comes here at this moment by His gospel and He does not say to you, “Wait, wait, wait,” but, “Behold, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation.” Believe in Jesus now, for He that believes in Him has everlasting life. Look to Him and be saved. The gospel which is preached in your ears is a voice from Jesus Himself attended by His own divine power and if you feel it to be such, you will obey it and you shall find salvation now and wait no longer. These people did not wait till Jesus journeyed into their own regions, but when they heard what great things He did, they went to Him. May you be led of the Spirit to do the same.

Note, again, that *these people did not stop at His disciples*. Satan tries to keep men from Christ by pointing them to ministers, evangelists, or other eminent believers. Persons are impressed under a sermon and they say, “I should like to speak with some Christian man.” That is very good, but after all it is not the thing which is commanded by the gospel. You are to believe in the Master and it will not suffice to speak to the servants. “But I would like to go into the inquiry room,” says one. Very well, I do not condemn that action, but the best inquiry room for a seeking sinner is his own bedchamber, where he seeks the Lord at once, with no one between him and his Redeemer. Why, if you could pick out the most earnest and thoughtful divines that ever lived and you could have twelve of them locked up at home so that you might go and talk to them all day and all night long, it would not be worth one bad farthing to you and it might even be an injury to you if it kept you from going straight to Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in men, and ministers must not be mistaken for priests. I shake off the thought of being a priest as Paul shook off the viper from his hand. I have often said I would sooner be called devil than priest, if by that word is meant that I have any priesthood beyond that which belongs to all my fellow Christians, or any power to forgive sin or to impart grace. My ministry is for the extolling of Jesus and not for the magnifying of myself and my brethren. I dare not say, “Behold the priesthood! Behold the church! Behold the sacraments!” My one business is to cry, “Behold the Lamb of God.” I point you away from all ministries to Jesus Christ, the minister of the new covenant, who alone can save your souls. These people were wise in not staying with the disciples, for they could not meet their varied needs. They did not



rest in the society of the Virgin mother, nor in that of Peter, or James, or John—they hastened at once to the Lord Jesus Himself to touch His blessed person for themselves. In this I would have you all imitate them. O that you would—

*“Steal away, steal away to Jesus,  
Steal away home  
For Jesus waits to save you.”*

To no one else but Jesus go, for the great things that *He* did and not the poor things that such worms as we are can ever do, should raise hope in your bosoms.

Observe, again, that *these people who came to Jesus in such crowds must have left their business*. I do not know what became of their farms, their olive gardens, their cattle, their shops, but they certainly left them to journey to Jesus. We do not commend any man for neglecting his business and daily calling, but I will say this, that when a man’s soul is not saved he cannot be blamed if he neglects everything till it is. That woman who came out in the morning with her water pot to draw water from the well was doing a very useful and proper action, for I dare say those at home needed water to drink. But after she had heard Christ speak, it is written, “The woman left her water pot.” Some of those at home may have said, “Where is the water, mistress?” But she would reply, “I have not thought of the poor water pot. Come, see a man that told me all things that I ever did. Is not this the Christ?” Ah, if you leave your water pots to find Christ, you may very well be excused. O working man in soul trouble, if you are out with a cart and the horse should stand still in the street while you breathed a prayer for salvation, who could blame you? If the engine paused while the stoker cried for mercy, or the shuttle lingered while the weaver begged for pardon, would there not be a justifiable excuse? If the shop shutters were kept up for an hour later than usual while the tradesman sought the Savior, yes, if the business of the Senate-house stood still and all the commerce of a nation stopped while but one soul sought Christ, it were worthwhile, for what human business can equal the salvation of the souls of men? Elections occupy men’s thoughts just now, but what are all these compared with making your calling and election sure? You are candidates for heaven and there is more importance in eternal election than in all other elections under heaven, for when everything else shall have passed away, this must endure. See to the one thing needful with Mary, even if you do for a while neglect what Martha thinks to be the urgent demands of the household. Let your first care be for your soul, “For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

*Many of these people, too, came from a great distance*. Some came from the south, from Judea. Others came from the north, from Tyre and Sidon. Some from across the river Jordan. Others from the hills of Edom. Rough roads and deep rivers could not keep those back who resolved to come to Christ. O souls, if you want Christ, let nothing hinder you. If there were seven hells between a soul and Christ it were worth while for it to force its way through all their fires to get at Him, for when you get at Him there is salvation and eternal life. Rest not, I pray you, till over all impediments you have forced a way. There is a plenitude of mercy about our Lord Jesus which will well reward you for pressing towards Him. Oh, get to my Master, however far off you may be, for the sight of Him will well repay the weary journey. I delight to see the holy ingenuity of anxious minds when they are eager to find the Savior—they will do anything to obtain salvation. I remember that years ago, when Bibles were not so common as they are now, a very, very poor man who was impressed with his need of Christ, longed to read the Word of God and therefore he went to a shop to ask the price of a second-hand Bible—the cheapest, the oldest they had on hand. “Ah,” said he, as he shook his head, “I have not money enough to buy it, but I will take great care of it if you will lend it to me from Saturday night till Monday morning. You won’t miss the sale of it and I may read a part of it.” As soon as He gained the friendly loan he gave himself up to the precious book till the moment he had to return it and so sought to find Christ. Ah, you have Bibles, some of you half-a-dozen of them, but you never look at them. The dust on the unread books condemns you. You take no trouble to reach the Savior. God save you from this carelessness and may you resolve to come to Jesus whoever may oppose. Be eager to listen to His gospel, though you may have far to go to hear it and may have roughly squeezed in the crowd. When you hear the gospel, cry to the Lord God for His blessing upon it, though dark thoughts may gather and Satan may try to thrust you back, be not removed from your purpose. Make a push for heaven and holiness. Never does the Lord work in any man a firm resolution to find the Savior and yet allow him to perish.

One thing I want to call very particular attention to is this—*these poor people came to Jesus with all their ailments about them*. I know they did, because we read that they pressed upon Him to touch Him and He made them whole. Now, suppose they had said, “We will not come till we are recovered,” then, of course, they needed not to come at all and our Lord would have been a superfluity to them. But no—he that was blind came blind, he who was lame hobbled as best he could, and he who was palsied came shaking and trembling, but they did come. The poor people who had all sorts of dire complaints, even those who had devils in them, came just as they were. That is the point to which I would bring every man here who has not come to Christ—you are to come just as you are. Are you a drunkard? You have to give up the drink, but you must come to Him as you are to help you to give it up. Have you lived in uncleanness of life? Come and trust in Christ, unclean as you are—trust Him to make you pure. Have you been dishonest? Come to Him as dishonest, that He may make you honest. Do not attempt to make yourself fit for salvation, for it is clear that no one is so fit for saving as the lost—no one so fit for washing as the foul, no one so fit for healing as the sick. Come to the Savior. Come just as you are. Catch the spirit of the hymn—

*“Come needy and guilty,  
Come loathsome and bare.  
You can’t come too filthy—  
Come just as you are.”*

If you think that it is needful to begin the work yourself, what is that but to insinuate that the Lord Jesus cannot do anything till you have started the work? Would you have it to be supposed that He is not quite up to the mark and needs help from you? Is He so poor a Savior that He is nothing till you enable Him to work? Think not so, but come along. You have heard what great things He has done—come, then, to Him even now—that the same great things may be worked in you.

**III.** I will not say much upon the third point which is THE RESULT. Of all that came to our Lord, multitudes though they were, *not one was ever repulsed*—no, not one. Since the world began has one soul been driven away from the Savior’s door? Oh, tell it in Gath. Publish it in the streets of Askelon if ever Christ shall be found casting out a sinner, for then may the adversary justly rejoice over the defeat of the gospel. Let it ring down the corridors of hell and let every devil dance for joy as he hears that Christ has broken His promise and is untrue to His character whenever you hear of one who comes to Him whom He casts out. I challenge all time. I challenge heaven and earth and hell to bring a case in which my Lord and Master ever cast out a soul that put its trust in Him. It cannot be.

As none were repulsed, so *all were healed*, and even so all who now believe in Christ are healed of sin and its plagues. “Ah,” say objectors, “you preach faith as the way of salvation.” We confess the charge and glory in it, since it is most true that it does save men. “But you ought to bid people do good works in order to salvation.” See here, good sir, if the people who believe in Jesus do not perform good works and if this faith does not make them moral, honest, sober, holy people, then we grant your point. But who shall assert that the doctrine of faith is other than purifying and sanctifying when we can bring multitudes of proofs that this very preaching up of faith and not of works is the most effective cause of virtue and holiness? Those who cry “Works, works, works,” have generally but a scant supply of such wares. Remember the age of Laud and his popish preaching? Who were the followers of that theology but the libidinous cavaliers? Those who preached salvation by grace—pray, who were they but the godliest men in the nation, the Puritans, against whom no man could bring any charge except that they were too sternly good and kept the Sabbath too precisely and walked before God with too much gravity? I wish the same fault could be found with us all. If that is vile, we propose to be viler still—

*“Talk we of morals, oh! You bleeding Lamb.  
The grand morality is love of You.”*

How can this divine morality of love be worked in us unless the Lord Jesus by His Holy Spirit bestows upon us a heart to trust Him and to take Him and Him alone to be our salvation?

One thing I cannot help mentioning and that is, as everyone that came to Christ was healed, it followed that *the attraction grew*. Say there had been five hundred healed, then when the people came and a hundred more were benefited there were six hundred to draw. And the next day, if there were a hundred more healed, there were seven hundred to attract others. Now, there never was a time since the world began when there were so many reasons for a sinner’s coming to Christ as there are this morning.

Just think of it. Every soul whom the Lord has saved is another argument that He is able to save you. In reasoning philosophically, if we find a fact, we put it down. But we do not dare to draw any inference from it because an isolated fact cannot prove a general rule. When we get two or three dozen facts, we say, "The common inference from all these is such-and-such," and a rule is proven. Suppose we could collect two or three hundreds of such facts, then we are really sure. Now, for eighteen hundred years and more our Lord Jesus Christ has gone on saving sinners and He has saved more sinners at this moment than ever before. Still they are coming. Still they are coming and still He is saving them and every one of these is an arguments that *you* should come. O my dear hearer, where are you—the man whom God means to bless under this sermon? Come at once and say, "I, too, will trust Him with my soul, for He has power to save me." Then shall another be added to the long roll of His wonderful cures. The Lord grant it may be so and His shall be the praise.

I desire now to spend a few minutes in real, hard, earnest work, in which may God the Holy Spirit help me while I plead with those who have never come to Jesus, that they should come to Him at once. My dear hearer, if you have often heard about what Christ has done and yet have never come to Him yourself that He might work a similar work of love in you, I pray you be not hindered any longer. First, come because *His very name invites you*—Jesus, a Savior. You are sinful, but He has forgiveness. Come to Him. You will be well met—a sinner and a Savior. Can two more congruous things come together? His name is Christ, too—that is, Anointed. Now, God has anointed Him with power to save and commissioned Him to save and He must and will discharge His high office by saving those who come to Him. It is His business to save and you may be sure that He wears no empty title and makes no vain pretense of being what He is not. Come along, then. Come along to Him who is a real Savior for real sinners. He is a Savior commissioned of God—commit your soul's business to His care. I say the name He bears rings out like a silver bell and this is its note, "Come and welcome! Come and welcome to Jesus Christ!"

*Our Lord's power should also encourage you to come to Him.* Of that I have already spoken. Nothing has ever baffled Him yet. Stormy winds and raging waves obey Him. The very devils flee before Him. Come along with you. He is mighty to save. Therefore come and hang the whole weight of your souls upon Him.

Next, *let His character allure you.* There was never such a mass of love as Jesus is. He speaks no harsh word to coming sinners—He gives them mercy liberally and upbraids not. Has He not said, "I will receive them graciously and love them freely"? Oh, come to Jesus. I am not calling you to Moses with the broken fragments of the law at His feet thundering in indignation. I invite you to Jesus with His pierced hands and open side entreating souls to come to Him.

Come to Jesus because God has made *it His glory to pardon sinners.* Constantine had a son whom he much loved and he wished the nation to honor him and so while his son was yet a child he caused him to sign pardons and charters, so that all gracious acts of the king bore the prince's signature. The Prince Emmanuel signs and seals divine pardons for the chief of sinners. And the great God in heaven loves that His Son should give pardon to sinners, for it endears Him to men and brings Him honor. Since it will honor Him to save you, come to Him and be not afraid.

Again, let me remind you of *the preparations* that are made for saving sinners. Christ has died to save them. He shed His blood to save them and do you think He will have these preparations wasted? I smiled last night at a little incident in my own home. Three of our friends had been writing hard for me all day and my wife, expecting them to tea, had spread the table bountifully and adorned it with choice flowers. I came into the room and said, "They cannot stop to tea, for there is a meeting at the Orphanage and they say they must hurry off." I confess I felt sorry as I looked at the table and all its adornments. My own good wife replied, "No, no. They cannot go. They must have their tea. I cannot spread a table like this and nobody come and eat. Go out and fetch in those highwaymen who want to run off. Compel them to come in." I fetched them in and they were by no means loath to sit down and partake. It would have been a great disappointment to the kind hostess if no one had eaten what she had provided. This is a homely story, but it sets forth the need there is that our Lord's provisions of grace should be used. He has spread a table and He will have sinners come and feed at it. What did the king say who made a wedding feast for his son? "Go out quickly into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." Thus the wedding was furnished with guests. Strange guests they were and yet they furnished the feast

with guests. They were odd bits of furniture, but they were needful. A wedding with a feast and nobody to eat it would be a dishonor to the king, so guests were necessary furniture. Oh you that are furthest off from God, my Master's mercy wants your misery that He may relieve it. He needs your emptiness that He may impart His fullness and grace for grace.

One thing more I have to say. I cannot tell if it will have power with anybody present, but I hope it may. I wish you would come to Jesus even *for His servant's sake*. If I were a sculptor fashioning a statue I should feel that every stroke I took made a permanent impression, so that if I only worked a little upon the hard stone I should make some progress and my work would remain. Alas! my labor is not thus abiding in reference to some of you. I do my best each Sunday, but I am not much the gainer, for you seem to be statues of ice and the six weekdays melt away my one day's work. It is weary work to labor thus in vain.

A painter takes his brush and though he may be executing a very difficult portrait, yet every stroke tells, each tint and touch of color denotes progress. Alas! I seem as if I wrote on the sand with some of you. The week's tide obliterates the Sabbath's marks. Am I always to weave in the pulpit that which is undone at home? You do not know how sadly we sometimes say to our Master, "Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" We would give anything to see our hearers converted, that our Master might have honor and we are sad when men come not at our call. If we see no souls brought to the Redeemer's feet, we are ready to lie down and die. I read the other day of an old minister who had been some twenty years without a conversion, as far as he knew and yet he was a really earnest man. At last, having much prayed over it, he announced that he should preach no more in that place, but resign his charge and the reason he gave them with many tears was, "I am doing no good among you. There are no souls saved and perhaps if another minister filled my place you might listen to his appeals. At any rate, I will not stand in the way of one who might be more useful and so I bid you farewell." As he went out an old woman named Sarah said, "O, sir, you cannot go, for you were the means of leading me to Christ some three or four years ago." "You," he said, "Sarah, I thought you were one who did not care for my ministry." "Oh, sir," said she, "it has been my meat and my drink." "Woman," he said, "why did you not tell me as much before? My heart has been breaking for you." In the course of the week, twenty or thirty came in to testify that they had sought and found the Savior through his ministry. All he could do was to say, "Bless the Lord, I'll not leave my post. But why did you not tell me of it before? O the sleepless nights I might have missed if you had but told me." Some of you may have been saved and yet you have never confessed the blessed fact, and I put it to you whether you do well and kindly by His servant thus to rob him of his wages and keep back comforting news from his burdened heart.

However, that may pass. You who have not sought and have not found my Lord—what message shall I take home this morning to my Master when I go upstairs to speak with Him alone? Shall I tell Him you will not believe on Him? I set Him before you once again as able to save you—will you again refuse Him? Or shall the message be that you will trust in Him for salvation? God grant that you may give a wise reply for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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